

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
HA-05 TRSE-00 CU-04 /070 W
-----011055 281131Z /17

R 280945Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6874
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 01859

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS : SHUM, PINT, TW
SUBJECT : CONTINUED PRESBYTERIAN CONTROVERSY

REF: (A) TAIPEI 1751, (B) 77 TAIPEI 6226,
(C) TAIPEI 1837

1. CHINESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPERS REPORTED MARCH 26
INTERIOR MINISTRY (MOI) HAS ISSUED A WARNING TO
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LEADERS ABOUT TO CONVENE IN TAINAN
NOT TO MAKE "POLITICAL DECLARATIONS." ACCOUNTS CARRIED
HEADLINE STATING "PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WARNED NOT TO
MEDDLE IN POLITICS" AND QUOTED THE FOLLOWING PORTION OF
WHAT WE ARE TOLD IS MINISTRY LETTER TO THE CHURCH
(WHETHER RELEASED BY MOI OR CHURCH MEMBERS UNKNOWN):
"IT IS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THAT SEVERAL OF YOUR LEADERS
HAVE REPEATEDLY ISSUED, IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH,
'MANIFESTOS' OR 'DECLARATIONS' ENTERTAINING POLITICAL
PURPOSES THAT JEOPARDIZE THE INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH
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AND THE NATION. SUCH ACTS HAVE APPARENTLY GONE BEYOND
THE RELIGIOUS AND EVANGELISTIC MISSION OF THE CHURCH."

2. THE CHINA NEWS ARTICLE REVIEWED THE HISTORY OF THE
DECLARATION, RECALLING THE CHURCH'S LETTER TO
PRESIDENT CARTER SIGNED BY SECRETARY GENERAL KAO CHUN-
MING AND STANDING COMMITTEE DEPUTY SPEAKER WENG KUNG-

HSIU AND QUOTED FROM IT THE PORTION URGING "...THE GOVERNMENT HERE TO ADOPT EFFECTIVE MEASURES, IN THE FACE OF THE CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, TO MAKE TAIWAN A NEW AND INDEPENDENT NATION, IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE WISH OF THE TAIWANESE PEOPLE TO BE INDEPENDENT AND FREE." THE CHINA NEWS COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE PRESBYTERIAN STATEMENT CAUSED QUITE A STIR AND TOUCHED OFF MUCH DISCUSSION, THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT TAKE ANY ACTION UNTIL THE RECENT WARNING.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THE INTERIOR MINISTRY LETTER IS CLEARLY INTENDED TO BE A PUBLIC WARNING TO THE PRESBYTERIAN'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING MARCH 28-31 (REFTEL A). AS WITH THE REPRINTING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN STATEMENT IN SYA CHAU MAGAZINE (REFTELS A AND B), REPORTING OF THIS STORY BY "PRO-GOVERNMENT" SOURCES NEVERTHELESS HAS ONCE AGAIN SURFACED PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE. PRESS ACCOUNTS ALSO NOTE THE EXISTENCE OF AN ADDITIONAL WARNING TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FROM THE TAIPEI CITY GOVERNMENT CIVIL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN POLITICS. THE PRESBYTERIANS WILL PRESUMABLY BE HELD TO ACCOUNT FOR THEIR FUTURE ACTIONS. END COMMENT.

4. CHURCH OFFICIALS AND LOCAL REPORTERS HAVE INFORMED EMOFFS OF ADDITIONAL DETAILS ADDING TO MOUNTING TENSIONS
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PRIOR TO THE PRESBYTERIANS' GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING. THE FEBRUARY 19 ISSUE OF THE CHURCH NEWSLETTER WAS CONFISCATED IN THE MAILS, APPARENTLY FOR CONTAINING POLITICALLY OFFENSIVE MATERIAL (EMBASSY POUCHING COPY OF THIS NEWSLETTER). CHURCH OFFICIALS ALSO FEAR THAT SOME INVITATIONS TO ATTEND THE ASSEMBLY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN DELIVERED, AND THAT PUBLISHED RESULTS OF THE ASSEMBLY'S CONCLUSIONS MAY NOT BE DELIVERED IF MAILED. THERE IS ALSO A REPORT THAT CHURCH LEADERS MAY ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THIS IN-HOUSE CONTROVERSY (REFTEL A) BY CALLING FOR A VOTE (NOT ON THE AGENDA) IN THE ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT THE LEADERS' "DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS". ACCORDING TO THESE REPORTS, THIS COULD ONLY BE ATTEMPTED IF A NON-KMT MEMBER IS ELECTED AS MODERATOR OF THE ASSEMBLY AND IF LEADERS ARE WILLING TO RISK THE CONSEQUENCES. CHURCH LEADERS ALSO ALLEGE THERE WERE BLUNT THREATS TO SECRETARY GENERAL KAO CHUN-MING THAT IT WOULD BE "DANGEROUS" FOR HIM TO ACCEPT THE OFFICE FOR A SECOND TERM, EVEN IF ELECTED.

5. UP TO NOW IT APPEARS THAT THE GROC HAS BEEN UNDECIDED HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN THREAT AND

IS BELATEDLY TAKING A POSITION JUST BEFORE THE
PRESBYTERIAN'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING. ALTHOUGH WE
KNOW OF NO ARRESTS TO DATE, IF STORIES OF THREATS TO
CHURCH LEADERS ARE ACCURATE, THE GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE
DECIDED IT COULD CRACK DOWN IF IT FELT THAT WAS
NECESSARY. UNGER

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
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Draft Date: 28 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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